

St. Mary Rehabilitation Working Group Meeting
12:30 – 2:30 July 6, 2006
Video Conference Meeting

Welcome and Introductions:

Helena Site: Lt. Governor Bohlinger, Paul Azevedo, Judy Edwards, John Tubbs, Anne Yates

Cut Bank Site: Don Wilson

Chinook Site: Dolores Plumage, Randy Perez, Paul Tuss, Dave Peterson, Mike Barthel, Corey Fox (alternate for Gary Anderson) Randy Reed, Max Maddox, Frieda Bryson (City of Chinook), Wally Elliot, Brandi Beecher, Ron Fisher (Blaine Co. Journal), Larry Kline (Havre Daily News)

Malta Site: Marko Manoukian, Kevin Salsbery, Bud Mavencamp, Richard Dunbar (Phillips Co. Commissioner)

Glasgow Site: Larry Mires, Kristina Davis (Representative for Senator Baucus), US Senator Conrad Burns

Information included in packets mailed to SMWG Members:

- July 6, 2006 Meeting Agenda
- Draft June 13, 2006, SMWG teleconference Meeting Notes.
- Approved April 23, 2006, SMWG Meeting Notes.
- St. Mary Rehabilitation Working Financials
- Senate Bill 3563
- Financial update on RDGP grant
- Updated contact list of SMWG members

Review and Approval of Meeting notes:

- Paul A. reviewed May 23 meeting notes.
- SMWG approved meeting notes by consensus.
- Paul A. reviewed June 13 teleconference meeting notes with suggested changes.
- SMWG approved meeting notes with Paul A. suggested changes by consensus.

Executive Director's Report

- Larry gave an update on the milestone of getting Senate Bill 3563 introduced to the US Senate and the House of Representatives. Larry thanked Paul A. and Judy E. and the SMWG members for all of the extra hours working to develop a workable solution for the St. Mary/Milk River project.
- Larry has been working with Senator Burns' office to schedule a field hearing in Montana.
- The Montana Water Resources Association will hold their annual conference in Sidney on July 13 & 14. Larry will take the St. Mary Canal pipe display. Display is now on a trailer and can be displayed at area functions.
- Larry reported the Milk River Joint Board of Control voted to reduce their annual donation to the SMWG. The donation will be reduced from \$1 per acre to .50 cents per acre and Joint Board will use the savings to hire a manager. Larry estimated it will reduce the SMWG donation by nearly \$40,000.
- Larry reported the City of Havre recently voted to join the Rocky Boy North Central Montana Water project, which may result in a reduced donation. Dave Peterson added that to his knowledge the City of Havre has money budgeted for the SMWG and will still be a supporter.

Approved Meeting Notes

- Randy Reed added the Joint Board decision is not final. The decision will be sent to individual irrigation districts for consideration.
- Larry suggested the SMWG pay for an additional 3 months of membership to the Family Farm Alliance, which will get the SMWG membership on a calendar year.
- SMWG agreed by consensus to pay \$1,250 for an extra three months and to pay an annual membership of \$5,000 in January 2007.
- Larry talked about the need for representation of the SMWG in Washington, D.C. as the Bill moves through Congress. Larry reported Joe Raider with Family Farm Alliance has been representing the SMWG. However, if it begins taking up a lot of his time he may need to charge the SMWG for his services. Marko questioned if the SMWG contracted with Raider, would he be a lobbyist? Larry responded Raider could be hired as a consultant to answer questions on the project. John Tubbs added that Raider's services probably would not be needed until January 2007.
- Lt. Governor Bohlinger suggested the SMWG keep in mind the Governor's thoughts on lobbyists.

Summary of In-Kind Contributions

- Paul A. gave an update on the in-kind contributions of the SMWG members:
 - Travel \$29,862.42
 - Time \$93,306.75
 - Misc. \$2,933.10
 - TOTAL \$126,102.31
- Paul A. will report the in-kind contributions of the State to the SMWG during the next meeting.

Financial Report

- Paul T. reviewed the financial report. Donation letters were sent out to irrigators last month and donations are starting to come in.

Update on Video Conference

- Brandi reported the video conference costs \$30 per hour per site when using Vision Net services. MetNet (operated by the State of Montana) charges \$52.50 per hour.
- Conference was set up using Vision Net at the cost of \$300.
- SMWG had a lengthy discussion regarding meeting by video conference instead of meeting in person.
- Don suggested that if meetings were held by video conference, it may be an opportunity for more public participation because public could travel to local video site instead of meeting locations.
- Paul felt it was a good test run and worked well for informational meetings and questioned how much will be counted for the video conferences.
- Dave P. agreed it was handy, especially during busy summer months.
- Randy Reed added he agreed it was handy, but felt SMWG should meet in person when critical decisions need to be made.
- Dolores added using the video option should depend on the type of business on the agenda and there may also be scheduling conflicts with some sites.

Working Group Fundraising

- Larry said donation request letters were sent out to irrigators and donations are starting to come in. He also added donation letters will be sent to local governments with invoices for the convenience of municipalities.
- Larry also showed the finalized SMWG logo.
- Paul A. gave an update on the RDGP grant that was awarded to the SMWG. Received \$900,000 and have spent about half of the grant.
- Paul A. also updated the allocation of the \$500,000 Federal appropriation secured by Senator Burns.

Senator Conrad Burns report

- US Senator Conrad Burns joined the video conference and thanked the SMWG for all of the hard work in creating Senate Bill 3563.
- The Senator reported he is working to get a field hearing scheduled in Montana around September 1 with Senator Pete Dominici.
- Burns said the St. Mary/Milk River Project cannot be fixed all at one time, because all of the money will not be allocated at one time. There will be hurdles, but the project is moving forward.
- Burns said there may be changes to the legislation before the final passage.
- Larry asked if a combined Senate and House field hearing could be scheduled in Montana. Burns said that was a good idea and he would try to get the hearing scheduled.
- Kevin questioned what are the potential hurdles? Burns said that there are large projects across the US, trying to get funding so it is important to get all the kinks worked out of the legislation before taking it to the Senate floor for final approval.
- Burns said the St. Mary/Milk River project is his top priority and he will work with Senator Baucus to get approval.

Potential Senate Field Hearing

- Larry reported he is working very closely with Montana's Congressional Delegation to get a field hearing scheduled in Montana. He proposed coordinating an August meeting to coincide with the potential field hearing. May be held in Babb/St. Marys area, Glasgow area, Havre area or Great Falls area.
- John Tubbs gave an overview of the procedures of a Senate Hearing. He said only a few people are invited to testify. Randy Reed will likely be invited to offer testimony.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Don said the Blackfeet Tribe may like to assist with providing facilities, meals, etc. during the potential field hearing.
- Max suggested Larry and Lt. Governor Bohlinger should attend the next Milk River Joint Board meeting.

Summary of Agreements

- SMRWG approved May 23 meeting notes.
- SMRWG approved June 14 teleconference meeting notes.
- SMWG agreed by consensus to pay \$1,250 for an extra three months for Family Farm Alliance membership and to pay an annual membership of \$5,000 in January 2007.

Approved Meeting Notes

Summary of Action Items

- Paul A. will present State of Montana's in-kind match to the SMWG at the next meeting.
- Paul A. will develop a procedure for recording in-kind match during the telephone and video conference meetings.
- Paul A. will get an update on the break down of the \$500,000 Federal appropriation.
- DNRC will develop a list of topics and issues for the field hearing with in two weeks.
- John T. will contact Michael DesRosier on match from Glacier County.

Next Meeting

- Will be held to coincide with Senate field hearing.